



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Rep. Frank Wolf
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Mr. WOLF. I rise in strong opposition to the bill because our Nation is going broke.

I rise in opposition to this bill.

We must carefully weigh the implications of a costly new government spending program at a time when the country already owes more than \$56 trillion in entitlement obligations.

I am also deeply concerned about the national debt, which has doubled since 2000 and is nearing \$12 trillion for the first time in our history. Any plan put forward must control costs, not add billions of dollars to an already ballooning deficit.

America is going broke. Is this the legacy this Congress wants to leave our children and grandchildren?

Below are additional remarks Congressman Wolf submitted for the Record:

"Health care is a very personal issue and there are very real consequences to what Congress does on this issue. Congress must be committed to offering affordable, accessible, and portable health care choices with the goal of fixing what's broken and keeping what works. I know there are good and reasonable people with deeply held views on every side of the health care reform issue. That's why I believe all sides need an opportunity to be heard and offer ideas so that a bipartisan consensus can be reached.

"I believe every fair-minded person would agree that Congress needs to find a way for the millions of Americans without health insurance to be assured of quality, affordable health care when they need it and to address the concerns of those who are paying for a plan they believe falls short of the coverage they need. Part and parcel of that discussion, I believe, also must be the recognition that there are many folks are paying for a health insurance plan that they like and want to keep and they don't want the government involved in their health care decisions.

"I am very concerned, however, about the health care reform process under way in Congress. House Democrats on October 29 unveiled a 1,990-page health reform bill--H.R. 3962--which is estimated to cost just under \$900 billion over 10 years. Especially troubling is the majority leadership's intention to fast track the legislation for House consideration within days of its introduction.

"Congress needs to listen to the American people, take its time and get health care reform legislation right. This is too important an issue to rush through under some artificial timeline. It is for this reason that I am cosponsoring a resolution calling for any health care reform legislation considered by Congress to be made available online in its final form 30 days prior to being voted on in the House. I believe that every American must have the opportunity to read and understand what Congress is considering. Now with the latest bill covering nearly 2,000 pages, that is more important than ever. A copy of H.R. 3962 is available on my Web page, www.wolf.house.gov.

"I opposed the first version of the Democrats' health reform legislation (H.R. 3200) that was introduced this summer, and nothing that I have read so far in the newest version introduced on October 29 changes my view. This legislation would set up a government insurance option with rates to be negotiated between providers and federal health officials. It has mandates for every American to have insurance and for employers to provide insurance. It would expand Medicaid to historic levels adding new mandates on states. The revenue sources identified include a surcharge on wealthy taxpayers and changes to Medicaid and Medicare which would translate to about \$500 billion in cost savings over 10 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

"When President Obama earlier this year directed Congress to come up with a health reform plan, I had hoped that both Republicans and Democrats could work together on this issue of such complexity in a bipartisan way and reach consensus on a plan to address the needs of uninsured Americans, protect those with insurance plans they like, and keep a lid on deficit spending at a time when our economy is reeling from recession and spiking unemployment. What we have seen, however, is the opposite. The speaker and House majority worked alone on H.R. 3200 that initially was to be voted on by the House in early August. They have continued to work behind closed doors to refine that plan, and the latest bill, H.R. 3962, was drafted solely by the majority.

"I don't believe that is the right way to develop public policy on an issue of such importance and far-reaching consequence to every American. This is a complex issue to legislate, and there are legitimate questions that Congress must answer. Among the many questions to be resolved are how to make sure health care decisions are patient-centered and remain between physicians and patients and not prescribed by some government formula; how to provide for Americans who don't have health insurance and ensure those with pre-existing conditions can get insurance; how to protect those who have health insurance and don't want to be forced to give up their plans or pay more for them; how to control health care costs and pay for health care reform without increasing the deficit; how to ensure that U.S. taxpayers are not subsidizing health insurance for those illegally in our country; how to ensure that the self-employed and small business owners can afford insurance, and how to ensure that

young adults can continue to be carried under their parents' health plan until they reach age 25.

"I have concerns about a government-run insurance option and what that will mean in the way of costly mandates for small businesses and other employers during a time when unemployment is teetering near 10 percent. I am also concerned about how Americans will pay for a \$900 billion plan as our country tries to work its way out of an economic recession and faces trillions of dollars in debt and a growing annual deficit that could be near \$2 trillion. I also have questions about finding a half trillion dollars in savings in Medicare and Medicaid costs. What will that mean for senior citizens today?

"We must carefully weigh the implications of a costly new government spending program at a time when the country already owes more than \$56 trillion in promised entitlement obligations through Medicare and Social Security. I'm also concerned about the national debt, which has doubled since 2000 and is nearing \$12 trillion for the first time in our history, and unprecedented federal deficits, which could result in increased interest rates for consumers if we continue to finance government by borrowing from foreign lenders. I have the leading bill in the House to establish a bipartisan commission to review entitlement spending with tax policy on the table to ensure that Congress addresses these spending issues, which if left unchecked, will be disastrous for future generations. (For more information about the SAFE commission, go to www.wolf.house.gov/SAFE.)

"I again want to emphasize: it is important for Congress to fix what's broken with our nation's health insurance system. But we have to do it the right way without changing what is working. We need a plan that controls costs without adding billions of dollars to an already ballooning deficit; ensures competition and choice; provides that patients and their doctors make the decisions on medical care rather than a government-run agency, and addresses skyrocketing medical liability costs and tort reform.

"I believe that the legislation in the House falls short of those goals and that Congress has a lot more work to do to provide the kind of health reforms Americans want and need."